

MAY 9 1968

Letters to the Editor

Published letters are subject to condensation, and those not selected for publication will be returned only when accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. The use of pen names is limited to correspondents whose identity is known to The Star.

STATINTL

COPYRIGHT
Fulbright's Double-Standard

SIR: Reading The Star's editorial "The Right to Dissent" (April 23), I remembered a forgotten report issued by Senator Fulbright last July about his visit to Yugoslavia in November 1964.

The report, a Senate Committee on Foreign Relations publication, was entitled "Yugoslavia 1964". Although the Senator was in Yugoslavia for only nine days and presumably had no knowledge of any of the country's three languages or familiarity with the complex history and conditions of the peoples of Yugoslavia, his report had an air of superior authority about itself. Yet the report somehow escaped public attention and criticism it deserved.

But this is not why I am writing. The reason is rather in the following conclusions of Senator Fulbright's report on Yugoslavia.

"There are . . . issues and irritations that prevent our relations (with Yugoslavia) from being as cordial and constructive as they might be. . . . These issues were generated almost entirely by the American Congress. Congress has a most important and constructive role to play in the shaping of American foreign policy, but it also has a greater capacity than most of its members are aware of to disrupt American foreign policy in unconstructive and even unintended ways. The debates were vigorous and a great many harsh words were uttered . . .

"This sort of thing happens fairly often in Congress and it involves many more countries than Yugoslavia. . . . Our unique system of separation of powers is not widely understood abroad and, because it is not, the independent actions of Congress often give rise to serious misunderstandings. We cannot be expected to alter our system of government to appease foreign sensibilities . . . but it is entirely proper for members of Congress to remind themselves . . . that their statements and actions can have unexpected effects abroad and that, therefore, they are under an obligation to exercise voluntary self-restraint on delicate matters of foreign policy."

Since he wrote this report on Yugoslavia, Senator Fulbright has been a much more vocal and adverse critic of American foreign policy of containing continued Communist aggression and subversion than his colleagues ever were about continued American aid to Communist Yugoslavia for which he took them to task in his report. The Senator has not followed his own advice.

There are only two possible interpretations of this divergence in conduct. Senator Fulbright is either passionately partial to a line of policy he favors or he claims an exceptional privilege for himself. Whichever it is, it clearly amounts to a double-standard.

Cyril A. Zebot,
Professor of Economics, Georgetown University.